

Antiochus Epiphanes

Some commentators have thought that Daniel 11:21-39 and the little horn of Daniel 8:9-12, 23-25 apply to one of the Seleucid kings, Antiochus IV, commonly known as Antiochus Epiphanes. This interpretation is very old; it seems to have been believed by many Jews at the time of Christ.

Antiochus Epiphanes ruled the Seleucid Empire from 176-164 B.C., nearly two centuries before the time of Christ. He attempted to force the Jews to give up their national religion and culture, and to adopt in its place the religion, culture, and language of the Greeks. Pagan altars were erected in every Judean town, and swine's flesh offered upon them; the Jews were required to surrender every copy of their Scriptures to be torn up and burned. He interrupted the temple service for about 3 years from 167-164 B.C., setting up a heathen idol on the Temple altar in Jerusalem and offering swine's flesh upon it. Much of this was actually encouraged and assisted by different factions of liberal Jews, one of which included the high priest. This was the most significant event in this period of Jewish history, a crisis comparable to the Babylonian exile. The religion and culture of the Jews was very nearly exterminated. The conservative Jews successfully rebelled against Antiochus, and a few years later allied themselves with Rome. They enjoyed nearly a century of comparative independence and prosperity under Roman protection until Judea became a Roman province in 63 B.C.

There are several ways in which Antiochus Epiphanes DOES NOT fit the prophecies of Daniel.

1. In verse 9 this horn is said to wax "exceeding great." For this to be true Antiochus would have had to be greater than Persia, the ram, which is said to become "great" (vs. 4), and also greater than Greece, the he goat, under Alexander, which is said to wax "very great," vs. 8. In reality Antiochus' kingdom was weak and tributary to the Romans. In 168 B.C. when he was seeking to make war on the Ptolemies in Egypt he was refused entrance to Egypt by a single Roman ambassador, and routed by the Jews when they rebelled. He cannot be considered "exceeding great" in any way.
2. This horn grew toward the south, east, and the pleasant land (Palestine), vs. 9. The Romans stopped his advance into Egypt, his success in Palestine was short lived, and his push eastward was cut short by his death.
3. The little horn came at "the latter time of their kingdom," vs. 23. Antiochus came at about the middle of divided Greece.
4. All attempts to fit his desecration of the Jewish temple into "2,300 evenings and mornings" (vs. 14) have uniformly failed.
5. In the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24:15; Luke 21:20) Jesus told his disciples that Daniel's "Abomination of Desolation" (Daniel 8:13; 9:27) was still future. We must conclude that Antiochus, who died almost 200 years prior to this, was not the "abomination that makes desolate."

The Abomination of Desolation

What or who is this "Abomination of Desolation?"

The "Abomination of Desolation" can be broadly stated as the desolating power of Rome. Within that broad framework it has a dual application: first, as Pagan Rome desolating Jerusalem in A.D. 70; this is the application Christ gives it when explaining prophecy to the disciples. Matthew 24:15; Luke 21:20. Second, it applies to the Roman Papacy which desolates Christ's heavenly sanctuary ministry through its human traditions and false doctrines. These teachings turn worshipers away from salvation through Jesus toward false earthly substitutes. See notes on Daniel 12:6,7,11 and "The Little Horn & The Beast" p. 30. See also *The Message of Daniel: God Cares*, vol. 1, Pacific Press Publishing Association 1985, pp. 296.

One inspired writer warns, "As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation [the United States] in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities." *Last Day Events*, 1992, p. 121. See notes on Revelation 18:4-8.

The "Abomination of Desolation" is mentioned in four places in Daniel and two in the Gospels.

Daniel 8:13 "Transgression of Desolation."

The little horn of Daniel 8 represents both Pagan Rome and Papal Rome.

Daniel 9:26,27 "Desolations are determined," "For the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate"[on the wing of abomination will come one who causes desolation].

This seems to refer solely to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70

Daniel 11:31 "Abomination that maketh desolate." Daniel 12:11 "Abomination that maketh desolate."

These two texts refer to Papal Rome.

Matthew 24:15 "Abomination of Desolation." Mark 13:14 "Abomination of Desolation."

In these two texts Christ assigns the term to the Roman armies that destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70 This is made clear by the parallel passage in Luke where the abomination of desolation is referred to as "Jerusalem compassed with armies." Luke 21:20.